

# Position paper

Linguistics, English



THE IMPLICATIONS OF ONE'S ECONOMIC DISPOSITION IN THE OMNIVORE'S DILEMMA This paper explores the implications of the economic and sociological themes presented in Michael Pollan's book, The Omnivore's Dilemma. As the author posed the question "What should we have for dinner?", it brought up questions that encompass not only the sources of the food that humans eat but also on knowing the process of how it was produced. On the other hand, this paper will answer the issue on the economic and sociological considerations of humans in their food choices as regards to the topics opened in the book.

#### THE IMPLICATIONS OF ECONOMIC DISPOSITION IN THE OMNIVORE'S DILEMMA

The Omnivore's Dilemma by Michael Pollan poses a very important question that will circle this discussion, that is, "What should we have for dinner?" According to his book, the nature offers varieties of food choices and through the years, humans were successfully able to take note which of these food choices are essential and detrimental to the health. Pollan's work focuses more on the dangers of eating food from what he called "the modern supermarket", which in his point of view leads humans to go back to discerning if the food is good or bad for the health. But the omnivore's dilemma is far more than just the confusion on what food to eat. It opens up a more important question in the factors that affect a person in choosing that food and the economic, as well as the social disposition, of a person plays an important role in one's food preferences.

According to Julie Guthman, some of these considerations are the "policies not even directly related to food and agriculture, such as taxation, financial

regulation, and economic development policies that have created huge disparities between rich and poor” (Merberg, 2012). Looking across cultures, indeed, there are people who are not well-enough to be able to think of what they will have to eat three times a day. Some people are considered lucky if they have something to eat just to surpass the challenges of the entire day or two. Take for example the people in the African region who are suffering from severe malnutrition due to starvation caused by financial challenges and insufficient resources. More than choosing and contemplating on what food to eat, they are thinking on where to get the food to eat.

As observed, people in the African region are relatively thin compared to those living in a more civilized nation like the America, where most percentage of people suffers from obesity. Take into consideration the statistics that Pollan presented. “ One in every three American children eats fast food every day. One in every five American meals today is eaten in the car” (Pollan, 2006). This only means aside from the fact that as compared to Africa, America has more rich natural resources in order to produce food, the country also has more food sources made available by government through different policies than those in the African region. Guthman said that “ to the extent that socioeconomic status and body size are associated, these policies must somehow be implicated in fatness and thinness” (Merberg, 2012).

Whereas Pollan thinks that dietary habits and the humans’ current problematic food preferences is an alarming problem of the modern world, it is believed that one more problem to consider is the economic structure that lies beyond every human’s disposition. The way one eats is highly dependent

and relative to one's lifestyle, which is also relative to one's economic disposition. For example, Guthman stated that "the decline in family wages...has pushed many women into the workforce, and many household providers hold multiple jobs to make ends meet" (Merberg, 2012). This incident, according to Guthman, increased the demands for more convenient food choices causing a considerable decline in the traditional way of family meals. These fast food chains and conveniently produced heat and serve meals caters to those who are busy working and who earns just enough to pay for those cheaply-valued foods.

The position is that these situations need a lot more attention than just knowing where the food came from or how it was produced. Quoting Guthman, "It is to note that these ways of eating are central to the current economy" (Merberg, 2012). It only means that the economic disposition of a person is a pretty much important factor to consider in analyzing the omnivore's dilemma. Maybe, it's not only that the humans are confused on what to eat because of the variety of food present nowadays. This may further mean that a large percentage of humans are confused because of an economical disposition problem because as discussed, one can only eat and choose food based from what one can possibly afford considering the time and resources available for a particular person.

#### References

- Merberg, A. (2012, January 17). Julie Guthman on Cheap Food and the Economy. Retrieved September 23, 2012, from <http://saywhatmichaelpollan.wordpress.com/2012/01/17/julie-guthman-on-cheap-food-and-the-economy/>
- Pollan, M. (2006). *The Omnivores Dilemma*. The Penguin Press.